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Reston fears CIA will erect 7-foot wall

By Charles V. Flowers
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Rumored CIA plans to construct a 7-foot wall surrounding two buildings in Reston has raised concern among citizens of Fairfax County.

"What would be operating in those buildings that would require a 7-foot brick wall?" Martha V. Pennino asked yesterday. She is vice chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

She said she attended a meeting last week with an "unnamed federal representative" who told her his agency planned to conduct top-secret activities in a complex in Reston. He didn't reveal the name of the agency, she said.

Mrs. Pennino said she has been told that an architect is designing a 7-foot-high brick wall to go around a complex that will be used for secret operations. "I was told that the complex is to be in an area planned for the town center. Naturally, the CIA is suspected. The town center isn't the place for a secret operation with a high wall around it."

But Joseph R. Stowers, said last night that the federal official represented the CIA. "He told me was speaking for the CIA, but he had no details about the timing. He said they want the wall, and alterations inside the buildings."

Mr. Stowers, co-chairman of the planning and zoning committee of

the Reston Community Association, said the group is strictly advisory and can make no decisions. He was also present at the meeting, as was a representative of the complex's owner, Mulligan-Griffin & Associates of Rockville.

Hunter Richardson, vice president of commercial marketing and development of the Reston Land Corp., said yesterday that the two buildings being mentioned are in a 15-acre tract on the periphery of the 400-acre town center, off the Dulles Airport Access Road. The land is zoned industrial, which allows offices.

The 3-story buildings are vacant now, but have been leased.

He did not identify the tenant, saying, "We don't know who leased them." Mr. Richardson said there is no wall, and there has been no application for one.

"Any wall would have to be approved by Fairfax County and a design review board of architects," Mr. Richardson said. "The corporation is promoting the positive growth of Reston, and this matter doesn't deserve attention."

As for any CIA comments about a wall or offices in Reston, Kathy Pherson, chief of media relations for the agency, said:

"We don't discuss the location of our offices and installations. They could be the targets of terrorists. We're not saying whether there will or won't be CIA offices in Reston."